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**U.S. INDICTS LEADERS OF COLOMBIAN TERRORIST
ORGANIZATION ON NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING CHARGES**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, ANTHONY PLACIDO, the Special Agent in Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") in New York, MARTIN FICKE, the Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") in New York, RAYMOND W. KELLY, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department ("NYPD"), and WAYNE E. BENNETT, the Superintendent of the New York State Police ("NYSP"), announced today that DIEGO FERNANDO MURILLO-BEJARANO, a/k/a "Don Berna," a/k/a "Don Bernardo," a/k/a "Adolfo Paz," and VINCENTE CASTANO-GIL, a/k/a "Profe," two of the top leaders of the Autodefensas Unidas De Colombia ("AUC"), a right-wing Colombian paramilitary organization designated by the United States Department of State as a foreign terrorist organization, have been charged in Manhattan federal court with

conspiring to import thousands of kilograms of cocaine into the United States.

According to the Indictment unsealed today, the AUC is a paramilitary organization based in Colombia that is engaged in warfare with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia ("FARC"), Colombia's main guerilla group. To support its terrorist paramilitary activities, and to enrich its leaders, the AUC is also allegedly involved in narcotics trafficking, and is responsible for the importation of multi-ton quantities of cocaine into the United States. The AUC is involved in overseeing the transportation of cocaine by sea, on board speedboats and cargo vessels, from Colombia to the United States, either directly or through third countries in Latin America, it was charged.

As alleged in the Indictment, MURILLO-BEJARANO holds the title of Inspector General of the AUC. The Indictment charges that MURILLO-BEJARANO has been heavily involved in narcotics-trafficking activities, including cocaine transportation and drug-related financial operations.

The indictment further alleges that VICENTE CASTANO-Gil is responsible for providing co-conspirators with transportation routes used for the importation of thousands of kilograms of cocaine from Colombia into the United States, and is also one of the top AUC leaders.

The Indictment also charges MURILLO-BEJARANO with conspiring to launder narcotics proceeds. Cocaine shipped to the

United States by the MURILLO-BEJARANO organization generated millions of dollars in New York and other U.S. cities, it was charged. At the direction of individuals working under the supervision of MURILLO-BEJARANO's organization, these sums were placed in bags or suitcases and exchanged at pre-arranged locations; the purpose of these transfers was to allow the conspiracy to repatriate narcotics proceeds to Colombia while concealing the illicit nature of the funds, according to the Indictment.

The AUC was designated a foreign terrorist organization by Secretary of State Colin Powell on September 10, 2001. Secretary Powell noted that "the AUC has carried out numerous acts of terrorism, including the massacre of hundreds of civilians, the forced displacement of entire villages, and the kidnaping of political figures to force recognition of AUC demands."

Mr. KELLEY praised the investigative efforts of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the New York City Police Department and the New York State Police.

Assistant United States Attorneys ANIRUDH BANSAL and ERIC SNYDER are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

